ACTION ALERT

The oppressive "Ethnic Harassment Bill" is back!

If you agree with militant homosexuals that the State should police the thoughts of its citizens, that verbal criticism of homosexuality should be prosecuted as a "hate crime," that organizations which oppose homosexual militancy should be held accountable for any act of violence against homosexuals, then you'll applaud H.B. 1257— son of the oppressive 1991 bill that made Amendment 2 necessary.

It was probably the event which did the most to bring about Amendment 2. On February 11, 1991, the Colorado State House Judiciary Committee considered H.B. 1059, the so-called "Ethnic Harassment Bill" proposed by Representative Wilma Webb, wife of Denver mayor Wellington Webb. The proposed law sent chills down the spine of every discerning, freedom-loving Coloradan who heard the truth.

And now, four years later, this bill appears on its way back— this time as the so-called "Expanding Hate Crimes" bill, H.B. 1257, introduced into the Judiciary Committee of the Colorado Legislature and authored by none other than the "gay rights" group, "Equality Colorado" (remnant of the old "EPOC," the homosexual opposition to Amendment 2).

As before, this bill will be marketed through the media as an attempt to "deter violence," or "protect minorities," implying that anyone who opposes it supports and perhaps even incites "hate crimes."

Obviously, we do not support attacks or mistreatment of any person — whether motivated by greed or racial hatred. A good look at the record of the Amendment 2 campaign reveals that Colorado for Family Values did far more to publicly oppose hatred and potential violence than did our opponents. But hatred and violence are not the issue here. Strict laws already punish assault and harassment. They should be vigorously enforced. Yet, based on our initial reading of H.B. 1257 (it was introduced only hours before this page went to press), the real meaning of the bill is truly frightening.

It's a sweeping state "gay rights" law

First, H.B. 1257 adds "sexual orientation" to its list of protected classes. Until now, Colorado law has limited itself to race, color, ancestry, religion, and national origin. (The bill's authors conveniently slipped the term in under a long "laundry list"of minority groups.) Next, the bill claims that people have the "right" not to experience fear, intimidation, or harassment. To enforce such a "right," the government will have to claim extraordinary powers, which is, of course, the whole idea.

Introducing the Colorado thought police

H.B. 1257 declares that ". . . the penalty for crimes motivated by bigotry and bias should be more severe than the penalty for the underlying crime." Any "class 1 misdemeanor" motivated by "bigotry" would be "reclassified to a class 6 felony." On the job, "harassment" would not even have to involve any "tangible or economic job consequences."

Furthermore, the bill imposes civil and potential criminal liability for any organization which "incites" a "hate crime." The definition is dangerously open to interpretation. Despite this vagueness, we do know that incitement necessarily involves speech. We also remember how militant groups accused Colorado for Family Values of inciting "gay bashing" incidents both directly, through our positions, and indirectly, through the passage of Amendment 2. Does this mean that we are civilly and maybe criminally liable for a homicidal person who receives our newsletter and goes on a killing rampage at a gay bar? Presumably, yes.

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This clearly violates the founding fathers' principle that government should address actions alone — not opinions or bias. It embodies Thomas Jefferson's definition of tyranny and the very essence of a "thought police."

Freedom of speech? Forget it!

H.B. 1257 classifies "harassment" — a term which is increasingly being applied to "unwelcome speech" or speech that "causes someone fear," as a felony offense.

Pro-homosexual witnesses at the 1991 hearing, including the cream of Colorado's civil rights establishment, testified that under that bill, *no speech* would have been exempt from the bill's provisions. We firmly believe a pastor reading from Romans 1 could have been prosecuted as a felon.

Following the testimony of CFV co-founder Tony Marco at the bill's hearing, Representative Webb told the press that his comments were an example of the "bigotry" she opposed. "That's chilling," Marco observed, "because what she was saying is that, if H.B. 1059 had passed, she could have sent me to jail for saying these things. That's what the harassment bill was all about . . . to send you to jail for saying what you believe is wrong with homosexuality. I would have been charged with a felony. I'm telling you, 'gay rights' laws are dangerous to freedom."

After Marco testified, the following day's *Rocky Mountain News* reported on his appearance under the headline, "Verbal fist kills gay-rights bill." The *News* chose to describe the bill as a law "barring violence" against homosexuality. The implication was clear: the "fist" terminology sought to portray Marco as advocating violence against homosexuals. In the media, anyone who opposes the homosexual agenda automatically qualifies as a "gay basher," inviting and inciting violence. Worse yet, under this law, the newspaper's biased wording could have triggered Marco's prosecution, actually making him a criminal for exercising his freedom of speech.

What you can do

The first thing we must do is refrain from the "it can't happen in America" delusion. This suspension of freedom most assuredly *can* happen here. Homosexual activists tried it once, and only a strong response prevented their success. Even then, the politically-correct elite lined up in favor. Those who stood for fairness were branded "bigots"! Remember that in Canada, criticism of homosexuality is already banned over the radio airwaves, punishable by hefty fines. Throughout America, "gay rights" city ordinances have forced religious institutions to violate their conscience.

Clearly, some legislators have forgotten the vote for Amendment 2. Maybe some are unaware of this bill's role in Amendment 2's history, or of the strong opposition to such repressive legislation throughout the state. These amnesiac politicians must be reminded of where we stand.

Please call or write your state representative today and ask him or her to oppose H.B. 1257. Make it clear you oppose crimes against minorities, but that existing laws already punish them without resorting to thought police or "gay rights" activism. For a personal copy of the H.B. 1257, call CFV offices and we'll be glad to send one to you.

To write a letter, you may address it as follows: The Honorable _____, State Capitol Building, 200 East Colfax Street, Denver, Colorado 80203. If you don't know the name of your state representative, you can find out by calling your county election commissioner. Once you know the name, you can usually find the number in a local telephone book, or by calling the Colorado Government Information Line at 1-800-332-1716.

We also ask you to call the individual members of the Judiciary Committee to register your opposition. They are: Jeanne Adkins (303-866-2936), Chairman Bill Kaufman (303-866-2947), Vickie Agler (303-866-2939), Diana DeGette, (303-866-2015), Doug Friednash (303-866-2910), Wayne Knox (303-866-2921), Martha Kreutz (303-866-5510), Doug Lamborn (303-866-2924), Peggy Lamm (303-866-2938), Gary McPherson (303-866-2944), Marcy Morrison (303-866-2937), Carol Snyder (303-866-4667), Bill Swenson (303-866-2920).

If we respond strongly, perhaps this threat to our freedoms will go the way of its precedessor.